

Show Me: Principles for Assessing Students' Visual Literacy

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Artistic elements were the focus of lessons on reading and responding to literature in one third-grade class.

"Have you ever learned something about looking up and down?" Jay asked me as we read a picture book together in his classroom. His third-grade teacher has recently been incorporating discussion of pictures and visual texts into her teaching. "The person what looks down is the strongest one" he informed me, referring to the concept of a low angle where the viewer is positioned looking up to a character in a picture, making them appear stronger and more powerful.

"That's really good information. And what about the person looking up?" I asked.

"She's terrified!" Jay responded, clearly imagining a weaker image, where the viewer is above a character that is looking up to them.

In this classroom in the western suburbs of Sydney, Australia, Jay (all student names are pseudonyms) and his classmates had been learning about visual literacy. Without using the term *low angle*, Jay was showing his developing knowledge about how visual texts make meaning, applying his knowledge to the picture book we were reading.

In Australia, visual literacy is integrated in all literacy syllabus documentation across states and territories. This inclusion recognizes that students need to develop new literacy skills, multiliteracies, in order for them to negotiate the growing number of texts that populate their home and school lives (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004; New London Group, 2000). These texts often use more than one mode, such as the visual and written modes on a cereal box; the audio mode for a podcast; or the audio, visual, written and gestural modes used with interactive multimedia or

video games. The various combinations of these modalities are commonly referred to as multimodal texts (Anstey & Bull, 2006).

Although the need to address this evolving textual landscape is well founded at the theoretical level, there is an increasing call to develop the next level of implementation, that is the curriculum and assessment aspects that occur in varied school and learning environments (Ailwood et al., 2000; Kalantzis, Cope, & Harvey, 2003). Part of this development is the call for students to be able to interpret and create a variety of texts that can include a combination of writing, speech, visual images, and electronic and interactive media. A key aspect of the implementation is providing students with the concepts and language to be able to discuss what they see and view. Having a "language for talking about language, images, texts and meaning-making interactions" (New London Group, 2000, p. 24) is generally referred to in Australian educational terms as a metalanguage. Contemporary studies in sociocultural theory, building on Vygotsky's seminal work (1978), cite the importance of metalinguistic skills in developing conceptual and discursive understandings (Mercer, 2000).

The call for educators to teach these multiliteracies and associated metalanguage to students assumes that teachers know *why* these concepts and skills are so crucial as well as *what* aspects and features of multimodal texts to teach and assess and *how* to assess students' understandings and skills. To date, very little specific research has been done on the *what* of assessment with even less on the *how* of assessment within multimodal contexts, particularly when assessing the metalanguage students might have about visual images.

Returning to Jay and his classmates, for instance, it is evident that they are developing multiple "reading" skills or literacies as part of normal literacy instruction in the classroom. However, an important question that

arises is how we then go about assessing what children know about visual images, in order to assist them and to better plan literacy experiences and instruction.

With this in mind, in this article I first present a theoretical overview of the concepts surrounding multiliteracies, with a focus on visual images. Having argued their importance and the need for a particular theoretical framing (that is, the *why* and the *what*), I then review broader assessment criteria in the realm of multiliteracies, investigating more specific studies of assessment techniques and tasks with particular focus on the investigation of a visual metalanguage (that is, the *how*). By integrating some of the practices from these studies with some key theoretical principles for understanding visual modalities, a Show Me framework is proposed and illustrated by a selection of assessment questions and tasks. The grade level focus for these tasks is flexible and could be applied to students from Kindergarten to grade 6 (called the primary school in Australia but equivalent to elementary in the United States).

Why is visual literacy so important, and what key concepts do educators need to understand?

In order to develop a solid assessment framework for visual literacy, a broader concept of reading is required when considering visual and multimodal texts. Written text unfolds in sequence, over sentences, paragraphs, and pages, while an image, with all its design and spatial elements, is received seemingly “all at once” when viewed (Kress, 1997; Walsh, 2006). Thus, a multiliterate individual will need to have a variety of skills to make meaning of all types of texts.

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) have developed a visual grammar that provides a substantial description of how visual texts work. This visual grammar is based on linguistic studies as well as semiotics, which is the study of various sign systems, from painting and drawing to movement and sound (Berghoff, 1998). In the same way that reading theory provides educators with concepts and words to talk about written texts, this visual grammar or metalanguage provides a basis for analyzing and critiquing the visual aspects of texts in a multiliteracies context (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996).

In the Kress and Van Leeuwen framework, images can be understood to be drawing on a variety of meaning-making resources, broadly grouped as representational meanings (where actions, events, or symbolic concepts are shown in an image); interpersonal meanings (where relationships are constructed between the viewer and what is viewed using resources such as high or low angles, use of color, and shot distances); and organizational meanings (where composition and layout choices influence an image) (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996; Unsworth, 2001). There is an extensive literature providing analysis of published multimodal texts (Callow & Zammit, 2002; Howie, 2002; Zammit, 2000). This literature provides a substantial base for educators, informing how they might view, create, and teach about visual modalities.

The inclusion of a range of disciplines in this discussion is also important. Other authors such as Duncum (1999) and Sturken and Cartwright (2001) asserted that areas such as fine arts, film studies, or graphic design also offer useful descriptions of how visual texts can be understood. In terms of visual images, I have argued previously that a broader, interdisciplinary approach is needed, in order to move beyond the language-focused, print-driven philosophy that tends to dominate literacy education (Callow, 2005). This article presents the argument that, while maintaining the tools to consider the more compositional and structural aspects of images, as well as developing critical analysis, the affective and personal interpretation of viewing must also permeate our theory and assessment practices. For example, the enjoyment students show when reading and interpreting picture books is an affective response that is arguably just as valuable as developing their metalinguistic skills in interpreting and creating pictures. Alongside this would be opportunities to critique the choices picture book illustrators have made, considering what type of worldview is presented by the pictures. These three dimensions—the affective, the compositional, and the critical—go some way to reflecting a broader *visuality* (Callow, 2005). To illustrate this, consider the painting in Figure 1, done by a grade 6 student.

The affective and personal interpretation of viewing must also permeate our theory and assessment practices

Figure 1
A Child's Painting of the Australian Outback



The compositional elements can provide a starting point. Some viewers might be drawn to the strangely box-shaped person, made salient by the use of black on the orange background, or perhaps to the large tree in the center. The colors suggest a dry landscape, with a mountain in the distance. Broad brush strokes create the background, and the figure is made of collaged black construction paper. The balance of the three trees is upset by the figure, shown with a long shot length, whose inky darkness has a sinister feel. Who is this curious person, eyes hidden, standing alone?

From an affective viewpoint, the child who painted the work may feel a sense of pride in her finished piece, and an Australian viewing the piece might immediately understand the image as referring to Ned Kelly, the most well-known Australian outlaw from the 19th century, with his signature armor and square metal helmet. The bold orange colors will remind others of the Australian landscape, and some may enjoy the child's style, which copies that of Sidney Nolan, a famous Australian artist. Personal interpretation and pleasure are woven with cultural knowledge.

A critical reader might question whether an outlaw should be honored in artworks and history books, while another may argue this outlaw championed the rights of the poor and is rightly regarded as part of Australian history and folklore. A critical literacy approach is being employed here, where some aspect of ideology is opened up. A broader visuality allows dis-

cussion, critique, and enjoyment around all types of visual texts.

Given this framework for understanding visual literacy, it follows that assessment should acknowledge the three dimensions of the affective, compositional, and critical. The specific aspects of these dimensions are summarized as follows.

Affective. Expressions of enjoyment when examining images or exploring pictures are signs of affective engagement. These may also be assessed by observation of facial features and gestures, the engaged discussions about a picture, and the evident pleasure taken as children participate in an activity. The affective also involves personal interpretation, where viewers bring their own experiences and aesthetic preferences to an image (Barnard, 2001).

Compositional. The use of specific metalanguage is key to this dimension. Concepts such as actions, symbols, shot length, angles, gaze, color, layout, salience, lines, and vectors reflect a metalinguistic knowledge about visual texts. These same concepts may also be present in longer, less linguistically succinct terms, where a child talks about looking at objects on a page because they are large or bright (salience). Teachers would need to know the concepts and related metalanguage when listening for such comments in an assessment context (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996; Unsworth, 2001).

Critical. The assessment of sociocritical understandings will vary depending on the text and learning situation. For younger students, comments about how the illustrator didn't draw a scene clearly or effectively might be precursors to more complex critiques of choices made in illustrations. Older students may be using more specific comments, such as talking about how an image positions the viewer to think or feel a particular way. Although each aspect of visuality is important, ideological critique is perhaps the most challenging for students and teachers (Anstey & Bull, 2000).

From the previous discussion, we can posit some key principles for understanding the *what* of assessing visual literacy. All texts are part of changing global, local, and social contexts. Visual literacy, including students' viewing, creating and discussing of texts, should be considered from affective, compositional, and critical aspects. Multiliteracies should also include learning about how texts are constructed, and then this knowledge should be used to redesign new

texts as part of applied practice (New London Group, 2000). Such pedagogical practice also needs to be part of a wider consideration of assessment and visual literacy. Based on these principles, the following section focuses on the *how* of assessment.

Developing the Show Me Framework

There are some common broad strands when presenting issues of the *how* of assessment in a multiliteracies environment. Kalantzis et al. (2003) have argued that “new learning” requires redefining *competence*, *ability*, *capacity*, and *intelligence*. Assessment techniques such as project assessment of in-depth learning tasks, performance assessment of completion of those tasks, quantification of the ability to work collaboratively in groups, and ongoing documentation of learning experiences through forms of portfolios should all be found in new learning environments (Kalantzis et al., 2003). This argument is consistent with current practices in general educational assessment principles (Cumming & Maxwell, 1999). For instance, the Australian state of Queensland’s Education Department states that all assessment within multiliteracies environments needs to be embedded in authentic learning experiences, be continuous and formative, and be summative and systematic (Hayes, Mills, Christie, & Lingard, 2006).

Within this broader assessment context, a further set of principles has informed the development of the Show Me framework, emanating from studies that have a number of common themes. These themes include focused and purposeful student talk in assessment (Arizpe & Styles, 2007; Kiefer, 1993; Madura, 1998; Sipe, 2000); the importance of affective engagement with images (Arizpe & Styles, 2003; Carger, 2004; Pantaleo, 2005b; Walsh, 2003); the inclusion of students actively creating or manipulating visual texts (Arizpe & Styles, 2003; Callow, 2006; Johnson, 2003; Pantaleo, 2005a; Vincent, 2005) and the significance of explicit compositional concepts and metalanguage (Arizpe & Styles, 2007; Callow, 2003, 2006; Callow & Zammit, 2002; Walsh, Asha, & Spranger, 2007). Arizpe and Styles’s (2007) extensive review concludes that “providing or expanding the terms or metalanguage to discuss visual aspects is crucial to developing better understanding of the texts” (p. 371). The inclusion of a more critical dimension in visual literacy is also an im-

portant theme, with a call for ongoing research into how to best assess and teach students to be critical viewers (Callow, 2003; Unsworth, 2001; Walsh et al., 2007).

Combining guidance from these studies with the initial principles developed in the previous *what* and *how* sections, I propose a set of general principles as part of the development of the Show Me framework. Assessment techniques and tasks for this framework should do the following:

- Be part of authentic learning experiences
- Involve ongoing, formative, and summative assessment
- Provide students with varied means for showing their skills and conceptual knowledge, as well as the processes used in learning (this includes time to look and think deeply about visual and multimodal texts)
- Use authentic texts, such as picture books, information books, electronic texts, and texts that students create
- Value the affective, compositional, and critical dimensions of visual texts, as well as the interplay between the visual and written elements
- Include student-made visual responses (drawing, painting, multimedia) to the texts viewed and discussed
- Provide focused activities where student talk and understanding are focused on specific areas of visibility
- Involve students using a metalanguage as part of the assessment

These principles provide guidance to teachers and curriculum developers when designing assessment items as well as learning activities that could also be used as the basis for assessment.

Using the Show Me Framework

The final section of this article proposes some benchmarks, examples, and tasks that will develop the Show Me framework for use in classroom contexts. Based on the above principles and on some recent classroom-based action research (Callow, Hunter, & Walsh, 2006), the framework assumes developing visual literacy as part of purposeful and authentic

literacy teaching and learning. As with assessment of reading and writing, visual literacy assessment should be part of a rich, integrated learning environment. The suggested questions and tasks can be modified as formative or summative assessment, as well as incorporated with learning experiences in themselves. Talk and active response to images form a central role in the tasks.

The Show Me benchmarks for this article are concerned with picture books and similar fiction-based images and multimedia. A similar framework for non-fiction and informational texts (including electronic texts) could be created from this framework. The framework is organized under the Affective, Compositional, and Critical dimensions, with the International Reading Association/National Council of Teachers of English Language Arts Standards 1, 6, and 11 matching each dimension accordingly (International Reading Association & National Council of Teachers of English, 1996).

The performance indicators described in Table 1 are developed over three broad schooling stages, based on English syllabus levels for the Australian state of New South Wales (New South Wales Board of Studies, 1998). Similarly, the gradation and phrasing of

indicators over these stages draws on the principles of the New South Wales English syllabus. As with any set of indicators, these are meant to be a guide for educators, who can develop their own indicators based on the context, class, and learning resources available.

Show Me in Grade 3

Let's consider how the Show Me framework might be used in a classroom setting. The classroom students described in our introductory vignette had been exploring visual literacy where visual texts from picture books to information text and video were not only used for content, but also specific visual aspects were explored. During one week, the picture books of Anthony Browne were used as part of the read-aloud and shared reading sessions. While reading the book *Gorilla* (Browne, 2000), the teacher pointed out how some pictures attract attention by their use of color, size, or angles. Working in pairs with their own copy of the book, the students were encouraged to find one picture they found curious or interesting, place a small sticky note on it, and then describe to each other what specific feature they thought made it interesting. The

Table 1
Show Me Framework: Affective Dimensions

Visual features to assess—metalanguage to use	Suggested assessment questions or statements	Grades K–2 performance indicators	Grades 3–4 performance indicators	Grades 5–6 performance indicators
Observe engagement (positive or negative) with the text. General indicators may include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looks at images while reading Comments on pictures Uses positive or negative affective comments and expressions Returns to look at particular pictures Shows enjoyment in reading or viewing 	<p><i>Before reading</i></p> <p>Tell me what this book might be about from the pictures on the cover.</p> <p><i>After reading</i></p> <p>Can you find me a picture you really like? Why?</p> <p>Can you find me a picture you really dislike? Why?</p>	<p>Locates favorite pictures in book or multimedia narrative</p> <p>Discusses favorite character, using pictures to assist</p>	<p>Justifies favorite image from a book or website preference</p> <p>Gives reasons for disliking particular images or pictures</p>	<p>Identifies particular aspects of specific image that are appealing</p> <p>Explains why particular images appeal to him or her but may not appeal to others</p>

Note. Affective Dimensions correlate to Standard 1 as described in Standards for the English Language Arts (IRA/NCTE, 1996)

Table 2
Show Me Framework: Compositional Dimensions

Visual features to assess—metalanguage to use	Suggested assessment questions or statements	Grades K–2 performance indicators	Grades 3–4 performance indicators	Grades 5–6 performance indicators
<i>What is happening?</i>				
<p>Choose a specific page to focus on during or after the reading.</p> <p>Have students determine whether images show actions, events, concepts, or a mix.</p> <p>General indicators and metalanguage may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Describes actions, events and settings, using evidence ■ Explains symbolic images (e.g., handshake means friendship, uses terms like <i>symbol</i>, <i>theme</i>, <i>idea</i>) 	<p>Can you tell me what is happening or what actions are taking place? What story do the pictures tell?</p> <p>Tell me about the setting where this story is happening.</p> <p>Is this picture showing a theme, a feeling, or an idea? How does the picture show this?</p>	<p>Points out and interprets actions in a picture or series of pictures in a narrative</p> <p>Interprets an image as showing simple idea or concept (e.g., this is a happy, sad, angry, scary picture)</p>	<p>Explains actions in visual texts, using some metalanguage (e.g., explains how “scratch marks” in a comic denote movement)</p> <p>Interprets variety of concepts in a visual image (e.g., beauty, health, evil, wealth)</p>	<p>Notes use of more sophisticated symbolism and concepts (e.g., religious icons, environmental themes, cultural references)</p> <p>Explains how visual texts may have both actions and concepts represented</p>
<i>How do we react to people or other participants in an image?</i>				
<p>Choose a page with a character that has a particular shot distance, use of angles, or use of color.</p> <p>General indicators and metalanguage may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Describes shot distance used, angle, and character gaze; explains the effect of each. ■ Describes colors and related moods or symbolism ■ Describes types of lines, shapes, or textures and how they create effects 	<p>Are we very close to the characters in the picture, midway from them, or a long way from them?</p> <p>Are we looking at eye-level in this picture, down low, or up high?</p> <p>Can you find a character whose gaze is looking at the viewer?</p> <p>How do these things make you feel about that character?</p> <p>Why do you think the illustrator used the particular elements on this page? Do they make you feel a certain way?</p>	<p>Uses simple terms to describe shot distance in illustrations or photos (e.g., close to us, far away from us)</p> <p>Describes if character is looking at the viewer and how he or she feels about the character</p> <p>Points out simple shapes in picture when asked</p> <p>Describes simple colors in pictures</p>	<p>Uses accurate terms to describe shot distance (e.g., close-up, midshot, long shot) and its effect on the image</p> <p>Notes if the character is looking down or up at the viewer, looking directly at the viewer or not</p> <p>Describes various colors, lines, or shapes in pictures and the emotional connotation of them</p>	<p>Uses accurate terms to describe shot distance, angles, and gaze and how this affects the viewer and the portrayed character.</p> <p>Describes complex images using color, line, shape, and texture</p> <p>Describes how specific colors may be associated with feelings or concepts in an image</p>

(continued)

Note. Compositional Dimensions correlate to Standard 6 as described in Standards for the English Language Arts (IRA/NCTE, 1996)

Table 2 (continued)
Show Me Framework: Compositional Dimensions

Visual features to assess—metalanguage to use	Suggested assessment questions or statements	Grades K–2 performance indicators	Grades 3–4 performance indicators	Grades 5–6 performance indicators
<i>How is the page designed?</i>				
<p>Choose a page with a variety of elements in the picture to assess page layout choices. General indicators and metalanguage may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identifies salient part of image that initially takes his or her gaze and explains reasons ■ identifies a possible reading path that the eyes might follow on the page ■ Identifies strong lines (vectors) that drew his or her gaze and points them out 	<p>Sometimes a part of a picture will really attract our attention. When you first look at this picture, what part do you look at first? Why do you think you look there?</p> <p>Where do you look next? Trace the path your eyes take on the picture with your finger.</p> <p>Are there any strong movement lines that your eyes followed? Show me.</p>	<p>Identifies an obvious salient feature in an image (largest creature, bright-colored object)</p> <p>With teacher direction, finds and traces strong lines in an image</p>	<p>Identifies salient feature in an image, citing reason why he or she thinks it stands out (e.g., he is bigger than the other monkeys on the page)</p> <p>Identifies simple reading path on more complex image, tracing path on the image and explaining why eyes might follow such a path</p>	<p>Uses terms like <i>salient</i>, shows examples in text, and discusses why illustrator may have accentuated specific elements</p> <p>Identifies more complex reading paths, discussing how reading path may vary, depending on the viewer</p>
<p>Note. Compositional Dimensions correlate to Standard 6 as described in Standards for the English Language Arts (IRA/NCTE, 1996)</p>				

class also completed drawing and labeling activities and further extended discussion around the visual images in more of Browne’s books. Later that week, after the story *Willy and Hugh* (Browne, 1998) had been read, seven students were assessed individually using a selection of the Show Me framework’s suggested questions.

In terms of the affective dimension, the teacher had noted all students enthusiastically talking about and discussing the picture books during the week. On an individual basis, each child was able to comment on a favorite page from *Willy and Hugh* (Browne, 1998), giving reasons why they each liked their chosen picture. Focusing on the compositional aspects of expression, size, and angle, Buster Nose (the bully of the story) was discussed with each child able to explain why he or she thought Buster looked powerful. Some said, “His face is really big” and “He takes up the whole room,” while others commented on his expression and clothes—“His mouth is angry” and “His outfit

has all spikes on it.” Jay, from our opening quote, was the most articulate with his newfound knowledge about angles. He explained, “He’s bigger and he’s taking up more of the page and he’s looking down. I can tell that because there’s glasses on at an angle.” When questioned about a symbolic picture of the two main characters shaking hands (with just the hands shown in close-up, suggesting friendship), no child interpreted this as showing care, friendship, or kindness. Rather, they all gave a literal description that they were just “shaking hands.”

The critical dimension proved to be the weakest for these students, with most having limited responses about why they thought Browne may have written the book or what the theme might be. They gave short comments such as “being nice” or “be friendly to others,” while some commented on a specific event in the book such as “if you accidentally knock someone over you can be nice to them,” rather than a broader theme or idea.

Table 3
Show Me Framework: Critical Dimensions

Visual features to assess—metalanguage to use	Suggested assessment questions or statements	Grades K–2 performance indicators	Grades 3–4 performance indicators	Grades 5–6 performance indicators
<p>Questions should be used sparingly and adapted for the text being read.</p> <p>Extended discussion on one question is more useful than brief discussion of too many questions.</p> <p>Key concepts and metalanguage may include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Inclusion and exclusion of racial, cultural, and social groups ■ Who is represented as being powerful or important and who is not ■ Discussion of what choices were made by the image maker and why they were made 	<p>What sort of people, family, or neighborhood does this book show? How is it different to your family or neighborhood?</p> <p>Are there any people “missing” from these pictures? Why do you think they weren’t included?</p> <p>Who was the most important character in the book? Can you find me a picture that shows how important the character is? Can you show me a character who doesn’t seem important? Why do you think the illustrator made the character look this way?</p>	<p>Can identify if his or her family or community is represented in books or media</p> <p>Uses visual evidence to justify how a character has been made to look friendly or unfriendly (e.g., large, angry giant with big eyes and nasty mouth)</p> <p>Notes how gender is often signified by color in a picture book</p>	<p>Discusses the ways different groups of people are visually represented in a story (e.g., the portrayal of slaves in <i>From Slave Ship to Freedom Road</i>; Lester, 1998)</p> <p>Suggests how a character could have been portrayed differently (e.g., the wolf in <i>The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs</i>; Scieszka, 1989)</p> <p>Explains why an illustrator may have chosen to create a story, represent genders, or use visual stereotypes to show good and bad characters</p>	<p>Discusses the ways different groups of people are visually represented in a story and how this might affect the interpretation of the story (e.g., all races are represented in pale blue in <i>Smoky Night</i>; Bunting, 1994)</p> <p>Explains how visual images can either support or stereotype minority groups, genders, or people in particular roles</p>

Note. Critical Dimensions correlate to Standard 11 as described in Standards for the English Language Arts (IRA/NCTE, 1996)

To provide the students with a hands-on activity in assessment, they were asked to redraw a character, changing the angles or shot distance, and to sort a selection of 10 photos (a mix of high-angle, low-angle, and eye-level shots) into two groups—those that made the person look powerful or those that made the person look weak (see Table 4 for other activities). The students then commented on why they had made their choices. The teacher noted their use of metalanguage such as *angle* (or words that showed that concept, such as *He’s looking down at us*), *shot distance*, and *color*, as well as descriptions of actions, facial expressions, and feelings. This provided further information about the students’ understandings of images and their use of metalanguage. Using the benchmarks, we could say that the data for this small group

showed that most were developing toward grades 3–4 in their affective responses, with their understanding of compositional aspects also developing toward this level, except in their understanding of more symbolic images. The critical dimension showed students working toward the grades K–2 level. This assessment information would, of course, inform the next round of lesson planning and literacy activities.

This classroom example illustrates a majority of the Show Me principles, in that it is part of authentic, contextualized learning in a class, involves formative assessment in this case, provides varied means for students to show their skills, uses authentic texts, and provides focused assessment activities involving specific metalanguage as part of the overall assessment process.

Table 4
Suggested Hands-On Activities to Support Assessment

Dimension	Suggested hands-on activities
Affective	<p>Provide a selection of images from picture books, magazines, websites. Ask students to sort these into different categories. Say, for example, "Sort into the pictures you like and those you dislike."</p> <p>Depending on the images chosen, have students categorize those images that might appeal to different groups (adults, children, girls, boys, people who enjoy sports, animal lovers, etc.). Ask them why they chose to group particular images.</p>
Compositional What is happening?	<p>Ask students to draw a new scene from the story with different events.</p> <p>Have them change the facial expression on a character to represent different emotions.</p> <p>Ask them to re-create a picture using cut-out characters and various setting elements (buildings, trees, objects etc.). Have them retell the story after creating the picture.</p>
How do we react to people or other participants in an image?	<p>Sort a selection of images into</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> —shot distances (close, mid, or long) —angles (low, eye-level, or high). <p>Have students explain how they know what type of shot or angle it is and the effect it has on the viewer.</p> <p>Ask them to take digital photos of a classmate and experiment with angle, shot distance, and gaze.</p> <p>Have them redraw a character that attracts the viewer's attention with their eyes (gaze).</p> <p>Ask them to use different colors or media (pastel, collage, charcoal, pencil) and draw a character or setting from the book. Discuss whether the colour or media changes the feel of the story or character.</p>
How is the page designed?	<p>Give students a few small sticky notes and have them place them on pages that have a strong salient point. Discuss their choices.</p> <p>Have them redraw a scene from the book, making one thing salient, such as a person, place, or object. They could use colour, size, placement, or framing to achieve this.</p>
Critical	<p>Create and draw another type of character for the story who comes from a different family or neighbourhood. Ask "What do they look like?"</p> <p>Take a copy of a character from the book and ask children to add labels to show the choices the illustrator has made (e.g. the main female character is very slim, wears expensive clothes, is usually smiling). Ask them to explain their labels.</p>

Planning for Assessment of Visual Literacy Skills

It has been argued in this article that if educators are to assist students in becoming multiliterate learners, specifically across multimodal and visual texts, then clear, rigorous, and equitable assessment must be part of that process. The introduction and development of the Show Me framework goes some way to provide an argument for assessment of visual literacy that is informed by sound theoretical underpinnings and supported by informed practical techniques and tasks. It is hoped that this article adds to a growing body of

work supporting teachers and students in literacy education. The continuing work, then, is to apply and test a variety of assessment techniques in order to ascertain what concepts and metalanguage students already bring to visual images and, based on the findings, to plan for meaningful learning experiences to support their development as viewers, makers, and critics of visual and multimodal texts.

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